

California School for the Blind Public Speaking Program

Welcome to California School for the Blind Public Speaking Program! This is an afterschool program that facilitates students at CSB to learn and practice Public Speaking skills. The program is designed to provide the students at CSB critical life skills to confidently, concisely and effectively share their thoughts and ideas.

This program was conceived by Ishika Chawla, a high school student volunteering her time to coordinate and teach this program. Ishika has been a Girl Scout for over 8 years and is passionate about public service, education, business and journalism. The Public Speaking program provides opportunities for the visually impaired students to practice and improve their Public Speaking and Presentation capabilities, a critical life skill to be successful in a job, business and everyday interactions.

Sponsors of the program:

- Nadrina Weseman – Residential Supervisor and Sponsor of the Public Speaking
- Ishika – Public Speaking Class Instructor (Girl Scout Volunteer) and Author and Designer of this webpage
- Alivea – Student Instructor at CSB

The Public Speaking Class at California School for the Blind is an after- hours school program, open to all residential students at CSB. The classes are held on Mondays at 4:00 pm in the student recreation room in Southridge Building #82

Why is Public Speaking a critical life skill?

Communication is the backbone of our society. It allows us to form connections, influence decisions, and motivate change. Without communication skills, the ability to progress in the working world and in life, itself, would be nearly impossible. Public speaking is one of the most important and most dreaded forms of communication. Learning how to become an effective public speaker can be a key difference between success and failure in one's life at home, at work and their community.

There are many reasons to learn Public Speaking but the three most important reasons are:

1. To Win Over the Crowd

An important skill to have in business and especially in the public relations arena is the skill of persuasion or the ability to win over the crowd. Inside and outside the workplace, the power of persuasion can carry you far and it all starts by honing those public speaking skills. Of course it is imperative to be knowledgeable about the subject you are presenting, but beyond that, when making a persuasive speech of any kind, including a sales pitch to a client, you need to be prepared to answer the opposition, and to speak with poise. To make a strong case, the ability to speak publically is not only important, but essential. For example, in order to express why a certain product or idea would be an interesting topic to an editor of a publication, one must use strong enough, convincing language to elicit intrigue and curiosity. A great pitch will persuade the consumer or editor to want to know more. When addressing any audience with an idea or argument for or against something, public speaking allows you to make your case compellingly and convincingly.

2. To Motivate People

A great public speaker attains the power to motivate his or her audience to do something, stop doing something, change a behavior, or reach objectives. But to carry an idea forward, you must be able to excite and enliven your peers, employees, coworkers, customers. Public speakers are leaders who are able to inspire their audience to work harder to achieve their goals. As a public speaker, your role is to influence your listeners and create an environment where everyone walks out ready to roll. You are not merely giving a speech in the attempt to get your audience to take a certain action; speakers are part of the action and can convey their passion and drive. It is not enough to simply know about the issues at hand but to make your audience share your passion. Elections have been won simply because one candidate was a better public speaker than the other. Being knowledgeable is a factor, of course, but more importantly, being able to arouse passion in people through skilled public speaking will motivate your audience to make a move. When people talk about having a voice in the world, they mean having an impact on the world by voicing your thoughts and your knowledge in an exciting way. A mastery of public speaking allows you to relate to the audience and gain their trust. As a skilled public speaker, you become likeable and believable, and you will be able to inspire and even entertain the crowd.

3. To Inform

The ability to inform is one of the most important aspects of public speaking. From presenting research papers and PowerPoint presentations in school to presenting ideas and pitches to your boss or client, informative public speaking is a vital component of a successful career across all work fields. Once you have their attention, a good informative speech sharing your knowledge of a subject with an

audience, enhances their understanding and makes them remember your words long after you've finished. For example, you might be asked to instruct a group of coworkers on how to use new computer software or to address your employees on company happenings. Whether it is giving demonstrations or sharing an area of expertise, this form of public speaking is an essential skill in today's world.

Students practicing speech drills



Students delivering prepared speeches





Instructors helping with hand gestures and body posture for effective and powerful speeches

